

four

Quarters

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Gino

• Philip F. O'Connor

The old men rose out of the long dry rushes that grew in clumps above the beach. As we crossed from the foot of Judah Street to the tunnel under the dunes, their eyes found us and remained on us until we reached the tunnel entrance. The eyes were still on us when we came out onto the beach. We could see then that they wore not swimming suits but wisps of white cloth that barely covered them in front and behind. As long as we were on the beach, they stood above us like dark emaciated statues, their eyes never leaving us.

The three of us tried to ignore them. We went to the beach to look at girls. None of us had ever really known a girl, not in the way that the older boys who lay beside them on blankets at the base of the dunes knew them, or seemed to. We longed to meet some, but we had no idea of how to go about it. To pass the time, Frank and I played a game. If you spotted a pretty girl, you said, "I got her." Usually your opponent would admit that she was pretty, and you would be the champ until he picked a better one.

Gino did not play. I think he enjoyed girls as much as Frank or me, but for some reason he did not like to let you know he was staring at them. You would look around sometimes and see his dark eyes fixed on a group of them, but when you said, "Hey, Gino? Which one you looking at?" he would groan and jerk his

head to one side, as though telling you, "Leave me alone. The girl I'm looking at is my own private business."

In many ways Gino was as much a mystery to us as the old men on the dunes. Frank and I had moved to San Francisco at different times during that, our first year, in high school, while he had grown up in the neighborhood above the beach. Yet for all the friends—girls *or* boys—he had there, which were none, and for all the things he thought of doing, which were only playing the pinball machine at the soda fountain on Judah or walking on the beach, you would have thought he had moved into the neighborhood only yesterday.

I think that Frank and I liked him because he didn't try to advertise himself. Take the pinball games. If Frank or I made a very high score, we would talk about it for hours. Gino played better than either of us, but he never boasted. If you complimented him on a good game, he would shake his head violently and utter, "Agghh," in that deep-throated embarrassed way of his that meant he wanted you to change the subject. His eyes danced nervously about until you did.

One afternoon Frank said, "You must know a lot of girls from grade school. How about fixing all of us up with dates?"

"I don't know any girls," he said uneasily.

"None?" I said.

"None worth looking at," he said, his eyes beginning to dance.

We believed him until a few days later when we passed a group of sun-bathing girls. They were all pretty, and two or three of them waved. One of them said in a very friendly voice, "Hi, Gino."

I turned and saw that Gino's eyes were on the sand. "Hey, Gino," I said, "that girl said hello to you."

"Yeah, yeah," he said, quickening his pace.

"But—" Frank stopped and peeked admiringly over one of his shoulders. "She's a real looker."

Gino shrugged and kept walking.

"Who are they?" I said, hurrying after him.

"Some freaks I went to grammar school with."

Frank caught up with us. "Why didn't you say hello?"

"Why should I say hello?" Gino said, irritated.

"Why should you say hello? She was a girl. She waved at you. She said hello to you. What do you want, a written invitation?"

Gino looked at his wrist, which did not have a watch on it. We had just arrived on the beach, but he said, "It's getting late. I've got to go." He turned and hurried toward the tunnel.

"That damn Gino," Frank said when he was gone. "What is he? A woman-hater or something?"

I shrugged. "I don't know."

A few days later I saw the girl who had said hello to Gino on the beach. It was on the streetcar I was taking to school. I was standing at the back of the car when I noticed her seated at the middle with a friend. I moved through the car and stood near her, hoping she would recognize me as one of Gino's friends and say hello. She looked up once or twice but said noth-

ing. I gave up hope that she would recognize me and was wondering whether or not I should try to introduce myself when I heard her mention Gino's name. I listened.

"I'm telling you," she said, "he turned about three shades of red. One of his friends looked at us a couple of times, but he didn't even turn around."

The other girl laughed. "Remember the Christmas party last year when he was afraid to walk under the mistletoe. He looked like he was going to faint. I thought I'd die."

They both laughed.

Poor Gino, I thought as they went on trading stories about his strange behavior.

All day in school I wondered what we could do to help him overcome the shyness or whatever it was that was keeping us all from sharing the company of girls. During religion class I decided that our task was a hopeless one.

Our teacher was a gravel-voiced Jesuit who had recently begun lecturing from a pamphlet called "Chastity and the Catholic Boy." It contained many references to sins of the flesh. Whenever he came across one of these references, he stood and began pacing about the classroom, giving an impromptu lecture on sex, stopping to cry out, "God, what's becoming of our pure, fresh innocent youth in this modern world?" He would finish by returning to his desk, bending over it, and beating his fists feebly against its top, whispering, "Lord, give them the strength to resist." Though most of the students snickered behind his back, Gino never did. That day, as usual, he sat erect, nodding slowly, knowingly, to such statements as "The flesh of evil woman beckons from the most unlikely places," while

the raw places on her sides where most of the hair was gone. Blood was oozing from her skin in many places.

Then we took Ragmop to our garage, which was warmed by our furnace. We laid an old blanket on the garage floor, and Deanems and Janet held Ragmop while I massaged her skin with the dark oily medicine. The medicine must have been soothing, for she stopped digging her sides with her feet. And she stopped biting her tail. She wouldn't bite where the oily medicine was massaged on her. It didn't have a good smell. But when we turned her loose in the garage, she rolled on the floor. And we left her in the warm garage for the night.

Next morning when Janet and I went to see about Ragmop, she came running to Janet. When I looked at the white garage walls, they were now smeared with blotches of oil where Ragmop had rubbed her back.

"These walls will have to be repainted, and this will cost money," I sighed.

After Janet had fed Ragmop, petted her oily body, she went to school a happy little girl. But her mother and I were not so happy! I talked with Deanems after I came from taking Janet to school. We decided now, since Ragmop had ruined our garage walls, we might as well let her stay there until she got well.

When Deanems went to get her umbrella, which she had left in the garage, she found the top chewed out of it.

"Oh, my umbrella," she sighed. "I got it in Paris!"

"Well, that's a hound pup for you," I sighed.

"We're going to have to get rid of her," Deanems said. "I didn't know a pup could be that destructive."

"Like a baby, she needs something

to chew on to exercise her teeth," I said. "I'll get her a beef bone this afternoon when I go after Janet."

That afternoon when I went after Janet, I drove over to Blakesburg to the butcher shop and got two beef bones. If I gave her one, I knew I would have to get one for Birchfield too; not that his teeth needed it, but he was already jealous of the pup. While at the butcher shop, the butcher noticed a knot on one of my tires. I looked at the casing and saw the print of puppy teeth.

Then I drove to the garage and had my spare put on. The garage man looked at the tire he had removed, which I had planned to have a boot put in and use for a spare.

"I wouldn't keep this for a spare," he said. "A boot won't hold in this. I'd advise you to get a new tire." Then I bought a new tire.

Deanems was so upset over her umbrella I didn't tell her about the risk I had run driving to Blakesburg around the curves on the narrow Sandy River Road. When I thought of the risk I had run with Janet's riding with me, I got a little nervous.

"Shan, that pup has ruined one of my galoshes too," Deanems said. "She gnawed a hole in the toe! What do you know about that?"

"That's a hound for you," I said. "One will do that when there's not a bone to chew on. We'll solve this now. You can leave your galoshes, umbrella, overshoes in the garage. She won't touch one when she's got a bone. I do know something about hounds."

"I didn't take the car back in the garage that chilly March night. I let it set in the driveway. At ten o'clock, just before bedtime, Deanems reminded me that I'd forgot to put the car in the garage.

"I'll do that before bedtime," I told her. Deanems went to bed, and I thought she was asleep when I went to bed too.

"Shan, you forgot to put the car in the garage."

"That's right, but I'll let it set out tonight," I said. "I'm dressed for bed, and it won't hurt the car to set out tonight."

Janet always told her mother everything. But she didn't tell her about my having to buy a new tire. Next morning when we went to feed Ragmop, who had all the garage to herself, she was lying on her stomach gnawing on her bone. She jumped up and limped toward me. Then I got down and examined her toes. There was mange between her toes. I got the mange medicine and tried to massage her toes but I couldn't.

"Daddy, what will we do about poor little Ragmop's feet?" Janet said.

"We'll find a way," I said.

Then I got a tin can and poured the mange medicine up about halfway of the can. I put one foot at the time down in the can and let it soak around her toes. When I had finished with her, she took off over garage, leaving big dark spots that were almost impossible to remove.

"We'll have to paint the garage floor now," Deanems said.

"No, the car will wear those spots off the concrete," I said.

"Not if you're forgetting to put it in the garage," she said.

I wanted to show Deanems and Janet that my theory was right—as long as a hound puppy had a bone to chew, it wouldn't chew anything else. So, I left my overshoes in the garage. When I came home from taking Ja-

net to school, Ragmop had left her bone and chewed holes in my overshoes. I slipped them to the garbage dump so Deanems wouldn't see them.

In the next two weeks, I had put four applications of mange medicine on Ragmop. She was well. And the hair started growing back. And in these two weeks I'd forgot to put the car in the garage. I left it sit out each night. I had plenty of antifreeze and I didn't worry. Very often the windshield was covered with frost, and I had to start the car and use the defrosters before I took Janet to school. Janet had told her mother the secret about the tire. Deanems didn't wonder now why I forgot to put the car in the garage for the night. We looked forward to the time when our car would get back in its home and Ragmop would be out.

When Ragmop was well of the mange and her hair had grown until we thought it would warm her body, we let her out of the garage. Spring was on its way too, and Ragmop, we thought, could stand the weather. We thought she would enjoy the great out-of-doors on our 1000 acres.

When we turned her out, she was a new puppy. She ran as we had never seen a young dog run before. She carried sticks in her mouth and leaped the streams and climbed the hills.

"She'll settle down," I said to Deanems. "She's got more pep than any hound pup I've ever seen. I've seen a lot of young hounds but I never saw one like her."

We let her run and get acquainted with the yard, the farm, while we turned our attention to the garage. It was a mess. The air within our garage wasn't good to breathe. We had practiced sanitation while Ragmop used it for a hospital. Now we

had to open doors and windows and scrub the garage before we would ask a painter to work inside.

"Daddy, where will Ragmop sleep now that you put her out and put the car back in the garage?" Janet asked me.

"Don't worry," I said. "She'll find a place."

Ragmop did find a place too. Since we could not put a basement under our house, due to rock, we had cut a trench all the way around down to the rock, so the plumbers could have room enough to put the hot-water pipes. Back under the house, near a hot-water pipe, Ragmop made herself a nice warm bed. Even if a cold wind blew during the day, she would run under the floor and snuggle up close to the hot-water pipe. When Ragmop's hair grew back to its full length, it was very short. And she didn't have hair to keep her warm like Birchfield. But she was one of the prettiest dogs in our valley.

"We've had a lot of trouble with Ragmop," I told Deanems and Janet. "She's been the most expensive dog we've ever had here. But she's worth it all. I'm beginning to like Ragmop myself."

"But she's my dog, Daddy," Janet spoke quickly.

"I'm going to have Cousin Penny to look her over and see what he thinks of her," I said. "He's a good judge of hounds."

When I fetched Cousin Penny, the greatest foxhunter among our hills, to look at Ragmop, the first thing he did was measure her ears. Then he put his hand on the back of her head and felt for a little formation of the skull. He examined her carefully.

"Where did you get that pup?" he asked.

Janet told him the story.

"She's a part Walker," he said. "I'm afraid she's not a thoroughbred. She doesn't have that little knot on the back of her head. I think she's a stray, and if I's you, I'd get rid of her and get me a real hound."

"Oh, no," Janet said. "She's mine, Cousin Penny! She's mine!"

"If she's got the blood in her, she won't stay with you for a pet dog," he told Janet. "When she hears foxhounds running in these woods, she'll go to them. That is, if she's a thoroughbred. But I don't think she'll ever leave you. She'll always be a pet."

"If she goes to the woods and runs the fox, I'll go too," Janet said. "You'll go with me, won't you, Cousin Penny?"

Cousin Penny smiled. "If that pup ever runs a fox, Janet, I'll carry you to Six Hickories on my back," Cousin Penny said. Then he laughed loudly at his own words.

When Mr. Broughton came back to cover the hot-water pipes, Ragmop went under the floor with him. He worked three days covering the pipes. The first day Ragmop made friends with him. She sat under the floor and watched him work. When he got in close quarters, she took advantage of him and kissed his face. Mr. Broughton told me about how friendly she was and how she loved him. In the afternoon when he got in a place where he hardly had room to turn his wrench, Ragmop reached up and took hold of his ear. She did it playfully but her teeth were very strong and as sharp as needles. Mr. Broughton gave a yell, and I went under the floor to him. Ragmop was still hold of his ear, chewing playfully as she would an overshoe.

"I can't let go of the wrench," he said. "And this pup is chewing my

ear off. If I let go, the water pipe will sag and it will hurt its plumbing."

I got to him as soon as I could and dragged Ragmop away by the feet. I took her from under the floor and tied her up to the clothesline. When Mr. Broughton fixed the pipe, he came out, and his ear was bleeding. We painted his ear with mercurochrome. He looked very strange with a bright red ear and one flesh-colored. He laughed and we laughed.

"She's got the sharpest teeth," he said. "And she loves to chew. Look at my overalls. But I didn't mind her chewing holes in them. Just when she got my ear was when it hurt."

When our plumber had finished with the job, I left a hole under the floor so Ragmop could go back and sleep beside a warm pipe. But Ragmop moved her bed. She didn't go back under the house. She went up on the hill where she slept on the oak leaves that had drifted beside an old log in a ravine.

"She's quit chewing things now," I told Deanems. "And isn't she a pretty hound?"

When I worked on the farm, she went with me. When Deanems went to bring Janet home from school, Ragmop would leave me and go back to the house to be with Janet. One afternoon I made a lettuce bed and covered it with canvas. All the time I worked, Ragmop stayed with me.

When Deanems came home with Janet, she brought Ragmop a beef bone. She chewed on it out in the yard until the sun went down. Then she trotted off with her beef bone. She was hunting a place to bury it.

"Think of the instinct of that young hound," I said. "She puts away something for a rainy day."

Next morning I looked at my lettuce bed and the canvas had been

ripped off. Ragmop had buried her bone in the middle of my lettuce bed where the ground was soft. I was furious that she would choose my lettuce bed when there were acres around us to hold her bones. I covered my lettuce bed with canvas again. And I put woven wire around the bed.

"She'll never bury another bone in that lettuce bed," I said.

One afternoon when I brought Janet from school, Deanems came to the driveway where I stopped the car.

She said, "Shan, look at this." She was holding the remnants of the door-mat we had used on the front porch.

"Something has to be done with Ragmop," she said. "I mean it."

"But I can't keep her tied up," I said.

"She's never got over the chewing age," Deanems said. "And you said she would."

"Now, jump on me about her," I said. "I never brought her here in the first place. If anybody ties her, it will be you or Janet. I'm through."

Deanems wouldn't tie her up. Janet wouldn't, and I wouldn't. Next morning when I went into the yard, I saw a pile of asbestos paper. I went to look at it. It was the covering off the hot-water pipes. Ragmop didn't like the covering over the pipes, so she pulled it off and carried it outside and went back to sleeping in her old bed beside the water pipe.

The cost of new insulation plus the plumber's labor, I thought. I can't stand this. I'll tie you up! I'll get rid of you. Deanems is right this time.

I tied her to the clothesline again until Janet, Deanems and I let our tempers cool enough to talk the situation over in peace.

"Janet, that dog has cost me hundreds of dollars," I said. "I could

My thoughts were on Gino. When Frank paused, I leaned over to him and said, "Better go talk to Gino. He's about to jump through the window."

"Damn," he said.

As he hurried down the aisle, the girl named Jeanne asked me what was wrong.

"Our friend. He's just not used to girls," I said.

I heard Gino slam the heels of his hand viciously against the machine. With a hollow clunk it tilted. "Traitors," he said in an angry deep-throated voice.

"He frightens me," said Laurie, the smallest and prettiest of the girls.

The other girl, Vivian, who was homely, sneered and said, "He's acting like a real creep if you ask me."

I sat down between Jeanne and Laurie and tried to think of something to say. I couldn't. My attention, as well as the attention of the girls, was fixed on Gino. He was shaking his head violently as Frank spoke to him. I was sure that the thin thread that had so far held us and our dates together had been pulled as taut as it would go. If we didn't soon get Gino to show some interest, it might snap, leaving the three of us to roam the dark empty streets alone. Frank seemed to be getting nowhere. I decided to try to help him. "Excuse me," I said, and I slipped off the stool and hurried down the aisle.

Frank was going over his argument about having to find out for yourself.

Gino did not seem to hear him. Finally he used his last nickel. With arms rigid, he stood gripping the sides of the machine. He seemed an extension of it. He stared intensely at the painted girl on the machine's glass scoreboard. A light behind her kept blinking on and off, illuminat-

ing her red halter and blue shorts. She seemed to be smiling down at him.

I glanced around at the girls. Vivian had stood up and was slipping on her jacket. "We've got to go, Gino," I said.

He released his hands. His arms fell limply to his sides. He turned and peered through the dark window. He seemed to be studying something, maybe his own reflection. He turned back. His gentle face was twisted in pain. He looked at each of us. His eyes pleaded, but he said nothing. He did not move.

We left him alone. As we led the girls out of the fountain, he was changing another quarter. He was so deep in thought that he did not seem to notice us.

Earlier Frank and I had decided to take the dates to the beach. It was a warm night, and the setting was ideal. We would tell ghost stories. The girls would become frightened. We would put our protective arms around them, and soon we would be necking like the older boys we envied. The old men did not worry us. We were sure they, like the other afternoon sunbathers, went to their homes or rooms or wherever it was they lived as soon as the sun disappeared.

We walked down Judah toward the tunnel, Frank and Vivian in the lead, and I, with Jeanne and Laurie, following. When we moved through the tunnel and onto the beach, a silver cone of moonlight opened to us from the sea. Frank left Vivian and circled up to one of the dunes. He looked to both sides. Then he called to us, "There's a good spot up here."

We climbed the hill and formed a little circle in the saucer of sand Frank had found. He passed out cigarettes. They were hard to light be-

cause of the steady wind that wheezed through the rushes above us. When they were finally lit, Frank mentioned the idea of telling ghost stories. Before anyone could say yes or no, Laurie let out a little cry.

"What's wrong?" I said.

She pointed.

We looked up. It was Gino, silhouetted against the lights on the hill. He was seated in a break in the rushes, looking down at us.

I waved at him. "Come down."

His dark hair shone. His light shirt fluttered in the warm breeze. But he did not move or speak.

"What is *wrong* with him?" Jeanne whispered.

"I don't know," I said.

Laurie said, "Let's go back to the soda fountain."

"Naw," Frank said, trying to calm her. "Maybe he'll join us later."

"I hope he doesn't," Vivian said. She had pressed close to Frank and was looking up, frightened.

"Maybe he won't," I said.

"Then why is he sitting there staring at us?" said Jeanne.

Neither Frank nor I had the answer.

"Come down, Gino," I said.

Now he moved for the first time, shaking his head slowly from side to side, as though warning me not to speak to him.

"Leave him alone," Frank said impatiently. "He's hopeless."

The girls were growing more nervous, so I turned from Gino and tried to listen to Frank, who had begun to tell the first story.

It happened in the middle of the story. Frank suddenly stopped speaking, dropped his cigarette, and leaped backwards into the rushes, crying, "Look out! Look out!"

Vivian screamed and flew backwards too.

The other girls and I had been facing the sea. We plunged forward into the sand. I swung around and looked up to see Gino standing above us, swinging a piece of driftwood crazily over his head. He was glaring. But not at us. At something beyond us.

I turned. It was awful. From the angle from which I was looking it seemed to be a giant. It rose over me, its arms extended like Christ's on the cross. It seemed to be trying to climb out of the rushes toward Gino. I could see now that it was a man, a nearly naked man. He stumbled past me and reached toward Gino, his hands opening and closing. It might have been—though I am not sure—the same man who had beckoned to me at the tunnel entrance.

Gino swung the piece of driftwood, cracking it against his skull. "Get out of here," he growled in the deepest, angriest voice I had ever heard him use. "Get out of here and don't come back, or I'll kill you."

I turned. The man stood above me for a few moments, glaring at Gino. Then he flew past me into the rushes.

Gino calmly lowered the piece of driftwood. Slowly, he raised his hands to his hips. He was looking down at the beach. I suppose he was watching his victim race across it. He reached down then and helped Laurie to her feet. His earlier shyness seemed to have left him, for he brought her to his side and took her hand in his. "Nothing to be afraid of now," he said.

The rest of us, recovering from the shock of it all, had lain very still. Now Frank and I stood and helped our girls to their feet.

Frank looked at Gino. "Think we

ought to go after him?" he said. His voice quivered.

Gino's eyes shone steadily in the moonlight. "What for?"

Frank hunched his shoulders. "Yeah, that's right," he said, "what for?"

Gino led the way over the dunes toward the street lights. Laurie walked beside him. When they reached the edge of the dunes, he took her hand and led her down the grassy hill to the street.

He did not look back.

News from the Decadent East

• Michael Paul Novak

A letter from the East: good news:
His third, green-eyed like her father;
His first, a slim blue volume—
Six years of sculpting joy in verse.
News of others: Bob his fifth
And another one man show in New York;
Cyril, finally a son, who'll join
His blonde sisters in racing through
Their ocean-bordered garden,
Aflame with roses.

And I—here, in the middle of America,
Where, by all accounts, all should grow—
Own a cat, write poems like this,
And the late frost has again
Butchered the roses in their beds.

The Day After

• Michael Paul Novak

The day after commencement everything seems ended.
The rolling lawn has forgotten yesterday's
Stirring phrases about bright beginnings.
An aging typewriter clatters from a room
Someplace down the hall. On the slivered spot of grass,
My office window's overture, a graduate—
One without handshaking, loving family—
Waits for a yellow cab to take her into
The world. I envy her her lone prologue
Because I, alone (except for that damn clatter),
Stay: she is another of my endings.

The Deepest Chamber

• H. E. Francis

Let this dying summer end. The air is hot and thick with the stale smell of fallen roses, and pine and salt, and the rot of plants dead in the ground. The temperature is in the eighties. Nobody budges. There is a stillness such as death alone should hold. It is broken only by the water that pours from Mill Creek under this stone bridge, toward the bay.

An anvil rings clear as a bell, a single strike in the still air—one of the kids playing in the old Timeo's shop there across the road. The shop is deep under the old oaks, an old room attached to the great house where Timeo still lives with his daughter Mona and three sons (Antone, Matt, and Filipo) and Antone's wife. But—make no mistake—there is no blacksmith shop now. That went out with the times. Timeo himself has a little trade as a barber, not much, enough to keep him in cronies and to keep his arms and legs moving, to make him feel useful.

It must be Matt's day off. He is arranging equipment—maybe going crabbing in the shallows, for the hand nets are out and the oars. The row-boat is moored by the jetty, near Mona.

"Hey!" Mona hears my yell and answers, "Hi, Eddie!" with a demonstrative dive into the water, then climbs back up onto the piling, and sits smiling. With her long, gangly limbs and her long black hair straight about her face, she has a strange other-world, almost ghoulish look.

She draws her thin, bony legs up at a funny grasshopper angle and looks distantly over her knees at me.

She has come to expect me. Everyday at the same time I come up the road—for exercise, to get out of my grandfather's sickroom. I hate to leave him (my mother and I live in constant fear of his dying at any minute), but I am still weak, sometimes a little ill, but mostly it is merely rest that I need and this little daily walk outside in the sun. One day I stopped here at the bridge. Now it is my regular daily aim to come and sit, stare into the water, talk to Mona or old Timeo. Soon I shall be strong enough to go back to the university to undertake the strenuous teaching load. But now nothing is more pleasant than establishing that quiet equilibrium that comes with merging quite comfortably into the mindless nature of things.

I stand lazy on the bridge. Heat comes up visibly from the pavement, and from above, it presses like a soft muggy hand. The sound of water lulls. Below, it is one silver glide, slipping over moss-green rocks, gently tearing at pieces of fast-clutching seaweed, and flows into a wider stream, then rounds the bend into the deeps toward the sea.

"Tom!"

I raise my eyes. Someone has called—my grandfather's name. But Mona is still sitting there engrossed in the water. Beyond, on the far side of the creek, is nothing but a gossamer mist

doubling the distance of the bank. Yet I am sure I heard a girl's voice. "Tom!" Yes, louder this time, and frightened. "*Tom!*" I scan. . . . Yes—in the water, near where Mona is perched, there is a girl—struggling.

"Mona!" I shout, pointing.

She waves back at me.

"No, no!" I cry. She laughs and dives into the water—but she passes the girl!

And there *is* a girl there. Her hands strike the water violently. Her head and body (she has a white dress on) bob and dip. The water sucks her away from Mona.

"Mona!" But why am I calling Mona? She doesn't hear, she swims back, she ignores my frantic gesticulations.

And Matt waves too.

"No, *no!*" I cry to him. And the girl—she is drawn down; I see her moving towards me, beseeching me, her arm half out of the water, clutching. It sinks. . . . She is drifting toward me. I can't believe I see it. But there, below! She drifts under this bridge. My God! I cross the road—She comes slowly out of the dark tunnel into the stream, just below the surface, catching the light.

"Angela!" I shout at her. Something in me wants to leap after her. But I cannot move. I stand rooted. Incredible! Even my hand refuses motion. I would swear it rises, I want it to rise, to lift me onto the ledge and help me leap—

"Angela!" Something in me cries out to her. I look back. *They* are still there: Matt and Antone and old Timeo sitting under the tree. Auto parts clink as Antone works. Their talk is very clear, but no one moves.

"Help! Matt! Antone! I need help. It's Angela!" I flag desperately. "Timeo!"

Matt rises. He carries something to the jetty, drops it into the row-boat, loosens it, jumps in, and flings the rope down into the bow. Then he waves, smiling, and his thick hands fall to the oars, drop them into the locks, and he begins to heave slow, long strokes—but in the wrong direction!

"Matt! Matt—*here!*"

But he glides into the sea grass and disappears in the flats beyond.

My throat narrows, taut, stricken. I hear nothing but the silly voice of someone distantly calling me, "Eddie! Eddie!" Nothing else. And the girl in the water is groping for me, pulling at me. Something in me cries out to break this prison of stillness. I will break it too, will it, *will* it—yes—

At last I tore my arms up, clutched at the wall, swung over, and dropped into the water.

And I swam, full-scooping, sweeping the water back.

Somewhere ahead I thought I saw white cut the surface. My arms sprang my body ahead in smooth, even thrusts until, despite the regularity, my lungs were afire and my arms pained. I felt a tautness coming into me, for there was the turn into the sea, the sound was coming closer—the waters would come on me in a sudden meeting where they would churn and suck the stream into the ocean.

But where was Angela?

I plunged forward—there was the Point, and where I swung round into the sea. It crashed—And Angela? The white grew into caps, crests of waves, all was suddenly white around my eyes. With an energetic burst, exerting all my pressure against the water, I flapped myself up seal-fashion.

ion, suspended an instant in the air, to snatch one glance over the waters, then slip back. Angela was nowhere in sight. I dived into the current and swam out a way underwater. . . . Once a slow flurry of white fanned out from behind a rock. My hands reached out toward her, but it rose quickly, up, up, and then, caught in an abrupt, invisible channel, it was drawn down, all her white dress swept off mournfully, beckoning. Instantly I followed, I went down. It was all pitch, and so soft. I seemed to lose my sight. There was only soft, dark water over me, growing around me, deep darkness and so soft—But the pulse suddenly thundered in me as if it spoke for me. "No!" I turned. I went back. I plunged up.

The agony was too great. Physically I couldn't bear it. My sides ached, my muscles were taut with strain, I couldn't stay down, and my heart seemed to swell and burst, pushing at my chest, crushing against my stomach, and my mouth parted in a terrible silent cry of anguish, and water poured into me.

Then I was rolling myself out of the water onto the dry sand, choking. The light was a great pain. I was breathing great heaves that ached me. My hands clutched the sand. I rolled over and lay exhausted, staring bitterly at the blinding sun as if my hot hate at losing Angela would drive it back. My eyes filled with salt and tears.

Someone in the distance was calling.

"Eddie!"

The girl is still calling me. I look up. Coming down the road is my cousin Ev, Aunt Luella's oldest girl. I know what she wants, but I can scarcely see her through the sudden

tears. Mona is still on the jetty, old Timeo and Antone in the yard beyond. Now I am aware of how hot the sun really is. The stone wall of the bridge is scorching. I have been standing here too long, I am sweating, and under my hand I feel the heat of the sun in my shirt, and my blood is coursing, so alive—

But my grandfather is dying, I know it. He is crying out to me, a searing scrape like a torn fingernail drawn over my heart. My breath tears out at her:

"It's him?—No, don't tell me. I know it." But she already has told me in her nod, the quick lowering of her eyes as if in shame—for *me*, yes. I want to strike her for daring to feel shame for me, but I am still shaken from the water dizzying under me, and the white foam, the dress, Angela. . . . My wind pulls. And when I instantaneously try to strike at the girl, it is in my mind only. I know it is a fool's gesture, that she is right, I should never have left him, but I needed sun, escape from the oppression of that dark room. Isn't it enough that this room we live in is dark most of our lives? We yearn for the sun, its soft infusion of life, health. Ahhh!—*careful* there! My cane, as if executing a fleeting thought, gives way. Ev's arm shoots out—

"Are you all right?"

"Yes, yes."

But she holds me secure until I pry myself loose from her.

"Don't!"

"But you'll fall."

"No, no, only a touch of vertigo from the sun." The cane sends the ground away. I feel more solid now, pushing ahead on it in a kind of hump-down, *hump-down* rhythm. I concentrate on managing the cane,

thinking that will drive out other thoughts, but they goad with insect persistence: my shame is too great, to let him die without being there after all the arguments, after so many years of flagellation, petty bickerings which demonstrate my, the grandson's, superiority.

"Is he dead?"

She looks back. "No, but he will be if you don't shake a leg."

She too can flagellate—and at such a time!

"Damn you! I can't move any faster." The ground is sailing under me as I move in long strides, surer with the cane now. Sweat forms and sops. My clothes cling, itchy, but I am aware only for an instant because my grandfather is back, his fingernails digging into my head as if he is trying to get into it, to fling open the top, his own vault, and get in whole to rest, and I will not let him. Why? Why? Because he can't die until I get home. He *must* know. I won't let him die until I get there. And he won't either—he will have life from me, yes.

"Hurry!" she says. She infuriates me. As if she is trying to make me feel that I am deliberately not hurrying—I who have been with him all summer, goading him into life since the very first moment of his illness. Didn't I, by making him lash out, assure him that life was there? Oh, it was misery—more for me than for him, but *he* didn't know that. He thought I meant the misery:

"At last, admit it! You're trying to put me into the grave, eh?" Yes, that's what he would cry out.

"I'm trying to keep you out. You hear me? *Keep—you—out!* Isn't that clear?" Naturally he would have none of it, so I retorted: "And if that's so, where are your children—

that holy hive who say they'll come? 'Anything you need, Pa, just write, I'll be right there.' That's what they say, is it? Well, where are they? *Where?* And I, your oldest grandson—"

Even I cannot control myself. My tears drive him face to the wall. I have to leave, frantic and more exhausted than he himself. But at his first sigh I am back. Oh, no, not as myself! I have assumed such a multiple personality that I scarcely know who I am anymore. My God! When I think . . . how will I teach next semester, as myself, myself who left the university last spring? Then he moans. Always I listen. Tending the ill makes the ears hypersensitive. The least hover of breath over a pillow, the least scrape of the turning toe against a sheet—these send one scurrying to the sickroom. But when he moans, it is not for me. "Arthur!" this time. Yes, call him—the reprobate son who would scarcely speak to you—so ashamed of you with your crippled hands that he would not come near your house, who would even keep his son, *your own* grandson, away from the house. And don't forget his wife either, nodding to you in passing—like an acquaintance!—and leaving you standing there alone. So you are turned away, hapless, forlorn little man, drying, beat, as if some one has suddenly drawn the puppet strings up taut in you and told you to go now, walk. And now—O my God, dying!

—but I learned how to answer your "Arthur!"

Thank God the shades had always to be down. In the dim light he couldn't know. I could sit just outside the light, and seated just so, my body tilted right, then *I* could be Arthur. Rasp the voice a bit. "Ha . . .

ha . . . !” he would anguish. Just to hear him laugh was joy, but at Arthur, *Arthur*, who deserved only his venom, though in my sanest moments, yes, I could be grateful even to Arthur for bringing him these last pleasures, those lips curled rather than downbeat in pain.

And yesterday Irene came. Her visit will give him happiness, I thought. But repelled by the powerful odor of cancerous putrefaction (there is nothing that will relieve its ponderousness), my aunt stood in the doorway and would not enter.

“Go in,” I whispered angrily, almost inaudibly. But to him the least whisper is a roar. How he would weakly call out to my mother, walking on tiptoe as she was, “Don’t walk so hard!” Poor woman! Oh, no professional nurse would do what she has done for him—cleaning, burning, washing heavy blankets, forever lying with one eye, one ear alert, rising on the least windblow over the floor, the brush of a curtain, the cat’s yawn. . . . No, no professional nurse. Such a labor is a true test of love. And what had the other six children against him? Whatever it was, couldn’t they hold a reprieve and let him die with illusion instead of standing there in the doorway like his own daughter, Irene, while I hissed, “Go in”?

He cried out, “Don’t talk so loud, it hurts,” but smiled, his hand touching where he thought she was.

“Irene . . .” His false teeth out, his mouth was sucked up in a fish slit so close to his nose that his chin all but disappeared; and with the eyes half opened and his hair shocked back, still hard with life, a lot of blond in it yet, his face looked all lids and eyes.

When Irene left after only a min-

ute’s suspension on the sill, he squinted as if he had lost her.

“Irene,” he said. I had to explain she’d got herself out of a sick bed to come, and with no nurse for the children, things were difficult. But my explanation did not relieve him. I had blundered. “Irene sick?” He wanted to get up, but he slumped deeper into the bed. I had created a pain worse for him than his own.

“But she’s well enough now to come, isn’t that fine?”

My remark gave him a glimmer of relief, but it did not wholly satisfy. I picked up the newspaper and read to him in a voice so soft that the restraint made me hoarse. Now he motioned me away. At least, there was some serenity in him, for he wanted me to read only when he was in great physical pain, as if, in a battle between hearing and feeling, listening distracted him from the pain. Anyway, when the physical pain was minimized, he liked to lie calm, though I cannot speak for the nature of the mental pain caused by Irene or the others at such a time. Or maybe it was a consummation, the final happiness that at last his family were gathered around him one by one, his issue made visible. “And there will be sons of sons of sons.” His words. When he lay there staring, was that in his mind?—because he would smile, his eyes fixed . . . there beyond me, beyond my mother, as if to him we were not even standing there, but through us something was clear.

But to see his children come to him, even for an instant, with their wretched word-of-mouth tribute was a complete reversal. Now they came from social duty. They had stopped coming years ago. Yes, it can be traced almost to the instant when they forsook him: that explosion at sea.

I have seen a hundred times in the smoke of his cigarette, as he told it, the burning flames of the ship he was on, and heard the screaming cook that was my grandfather caught in the galley, cracked flesh, raw-red and bleeding from fire. He was a human statue of bandages for months after. I remembered him that way sometimes (the sight my grandmother used to tell): only his eyes emerging from the bandages, then his body, and then last the crippled-for-life hands that in dark whispers his seven children spoke about—because it was his hands always that lay in my grandmother's vision, hands that reached over and touched shivers into her lying in bed with him when there was no excuse, no sick children, no company, to take her from his bed, her mouth drawn up tight, sleepless nights beside hands that her flesh could not warm to, mother of his ten, cringing at the loving crippled hands tightened into claws now that must run over her body. "I can't, Tom. I can't—" But no word from him. The quiet peace of wise and wretched acceptance was his.

The children left him, as she had left him first.

But when they buried her body years later, he stood beside her second husband, only it was he who had to be held up by his sons, kept from falling in his weakness. "Mother of my children, wife—" His knees buckled. It was all they could do to hold him up; they supported him to the car. You could hear his quiet whimpers all the way back from the cemetery.

The cemetery is on my right. I don't look. I know its each aisle, the sound of the caretaker's mower, the familiar clink of shovel against dirt.

I know I must come back to it too soon.

"Is the doctor there? and the minister?" I ask Ev. "Is my mother alone?"

"Well, who else could come for you? And how could I do that without leaving her alone?" Her answer—quick snarls for everything. The well-trained daughter of her mother. I can hear Luella now—"protecting" her daughter from this "reprobate father," against whom she herself has prejudiced this child. On the day he fell ill, Ev asked her, "Who is sick, Mama?"

"No one you know, dear. Only my father," Luella answered. Only *my* father! Not *your* grandfather, but *my* father! I ask you: How is a poor child to know that a part of her own self is going? But enough of this. It drives me to such a frenzy that I will fall if I am not careful. I press down sharply on my cane.

I must hurry before he goes. I must tell him that I have seen his Angela, I knew who she was. For a moment she was my Angela. He cannot die without my telling him that at last I do know what he meant, what he has always tried to tell me. In actuality, whenever he said, "I am a thousand, twenty-five thousand years old," I thought: Such a joke! He would laugh. And he would joke about being in the arena with the Christian martyrs: "Don't you remember? Well, you will. Someday you'll know what it's like to have a lion sink its teeth into you. Your mind is already as old as mine—older, yes." And from these words I derived that expression I use, "Tell it to your grandfather, he's younger than I am."

"You're exaggerating," I'd say.

"Perhaps, but how else can you get

people to see anything these days, eh?"

Even I, with my hatred of ignorance, with a mind trained in the most truly scientific manner to accept nothing as final but only as a stepping stone to infinite possibilities—even I dared to laugh in the vulgarity of my learned ignorance, while he with his sixth-grade education dared not scoff. Always he probed, though (make no mistake) he had a faith beyond science, yet he did not let that hedge falsely and hinder practically. God's is God's, and his his. Witness—in the hurricane of 1938—how, when the tree fell over the kitchen and his twin brother threw his sixty-odd years down on his knees and cried out, "O God, forgive me. Never, never will I sin again—" old Tom cried out, "Get up off your knees, you damned fool. You should have prayed years ago. Let's get this tree the hell out of here."

At last our tree is in sight, a great green umbrella over the house. I can just see it from here, doming high, and then the house, the small second story, then the bedroom el—his sick-room.

"Hurry!" I cry to her. She has fallen against a tree, resting.

"I can't, I'm dead," she cries.

Don't use that word, I want to cry out, but what's the use? She's still a child, she doesn't really know him, and I can't stop to look at her again, I'm almost there. Ah, that house—what have we come to—that the house once built as a stable by the richest mason on Long Island should someday be the birthplace of his great grandchildren.

I am sweating, my heart about to burst in me, but everywhere things are so still—no breeze—and the sun burns. The grass is scorched brown,

pine scent is thick, even my breath is dry. Only the trees are green; I want to throw my arms out, hold their coolness, hold life. Yes, everything, everything is so still that I hear it—I hear his breath, it scrapes like a dry leaf over my flesh. Gramp! The cry is in my head. It echoes cavernously through my summer-dry body. "Gramp—"

Hurry!

Since my own illness, I have changed. I am even closer to him than I was before. I hear, I see—well, I can only say there is *more* of me when I am ill. Oh, my illness is a slight thing now, overwork at the university, agitated by this illness of my grandfather, a slight breakdown. What a miracle that my mother still holds up! We have been expecting her to collapse any day, but she washes, cooks, carries, a regular workhorse. Unbelievable! Work that would kill a regular nurse.

She is standing in the doorway, her hands caught together, little wrenches twisting in quiet agony. Her life, like his, has been a wretched series of disasters, a pattern traceable through generations, handed down in silent reluctance, waiting for the right will to break it. Is that it? Is that life?

She withdraws after a hasty beckoning, indicating that she is a little relieved. The Reverend Endwater's car is out front, and the sleek black car of Doctor Simpson. —and the ground wavers, suddenly I do feel my heart, it is thundering in my head, but my face is cold, damp, my hands are wet as I open the door. . . .

Gramp?

My cane strikes the door accidentally. The doctor glares at me in condescending patience. The Reverend

Endwater drops his eyes. I hand the cane to my mother.

"Can he talk?"

"He hasn't said anything for the last half hour. Once he called you, then he called someone else. He's been mumbling, but nothing clear."

"Angela," I whisper, but my mother couldn't know.

I go into the bedroom. I have to tell him: Gramp, I understand now how we are, you and I, all of us.

How small he looks lying there! His toes are the most prominent, but the rest of him is sunk under the blanket (he is constantly cold), his chicken breast strangely small now. The largest part is his head, so fleshless that it seems almost solid bone, the skin drawn over the skull, the eyes hollow parchment-flutters of flesh, and that jaw bereft of the false teeth is pressed together under the nose, a final taper of the high cheek bones. I lean close, touching his cheek with my lips. So close, I can see the hairs that have grown since yesterday and feel them chafe my lips. He is so dry, but there is a little silver streak of saliva between his lips that finds its way down into the corner nearest me, and the slightest dry warmth on my face from his nose. There are long hairs in its hollows.

"Gramp?" I set my hand on his forehead lightly, pushing the thick growth of hair back. A sigh so soft, but no movement, and then his lips move, barely perceptible twitches, more perceptible, more—Is he trying to smile? The lips part. The saliva glistens in the light.

"Gramp, it is me—Eddie."

His lips remain as they were. But—yes, there is the least change in his breath, as if he were trying—but no, I must be imagining it. I take his hand. It is hard, as always, always

immovable, with its tendons once burnt tight and the bones inflexible; and all he did with those hands crowds into my mind—built a house, cooked for himself, made toys for the kids.

"Gramp, listen to me—" I touch his hand and his feet both, whisper in his ear. "Can you hear me? It's Eddie, *Eddie*, Gramp." His mouth twitches, a least flutter of his lids. They draw up, sink—so effortful!—draw up again . . . finally held back, and his eyes blue and glistening in that dry flesh—so young, though at once they grow rheumy, there is a little spill of water over the lower rims. But he is staring up straight, not at me. His hands begin to rise, ever so slightly, and fall. His lips move; sibilant, whistling sounds almost inaudible come forth. He tries, tries, tries, but I can only make out ". . . cold . . . snow . . ." And then it comes over me that the light slatting through the blinds, striking the cream blanket, must appear to be snow to him, he is cold. . . . Cold! My God, dying! I set my hand to his face. "Gramp, I must tell you. I was at the bridge. I saw Angela. She called me. 'Tom, Tom!' she cried (he smiles!), and I went in—yes—*without* moving, I went in. You understand? I was you, Gramp. I felt you. I know now." And he is *still* smiling, the faintest curve, and the eyes seem to rise, to be lifted a little out of his head. I crowd in close, set my face before his eyes. "You hear me, Gramp? *Do* you?"

"Eddie!" my mother says.

Ignoring her, I say it again: "Do you hear me? I saw Angela." And his eyes stare up, but not at me—through me, yet without any relaxation of vision. I sink back into the chair. What is there? Is what he is seeing

close? Is it Angela again? Will he believe that I was with her, the Angela he had lost, drowned, so many years ago? But more: Does he know that I understand? At that moment on the bridge I was the grandfather inside me, I was becoming more of *him* as he lay there depleting? I want to *tell* him that I know his first love, inside me, that's been with him all his life, to make up for the discouragement he might have had from me and give him a final joy in knowing that at last he has succeeded in communicating—not merely in handing down unconsciously whatever he was, but that at last someone was aware of himself *in* us for all time.

But no! The smile goes, the flesh grows taut, the eyes flutter, close. Only his hands try to move up, up—They fall, and then sounds come, hollow air breaks through his lips, puckering them with weak sounds. Behind me, my mother says, "Oh, no—" The doctor moves me, he takes Gramp's hand. The minister, who has already prayed with him now begins to mumble quietly. The sounds grow faintly louder, my mother touches me, we are all waiting, waiting, not even knowing the true sound of the end of this object of waiting until it comes, the deep distant sound of water sucked faintly into its last pipe, and then a sigh.

And at the same time the Reverend stops, his eyes upraised. The doctor rises, nods to us, and I feel a heavy weight, for an instant staring at

Gramp, still. I have failed, I have failed you, I didn't tell you—Or did I? At this moment it is not the dying, but not knowing if he has heard that is so terrible. But as I stare at him, I know his grief now—mine is the same grief *he* had to bear, we all bear—that we are never to know until it is too late to tell, that we are never to know but the anguish of wanting to tell what we feel lies behind our permanence. I see my own children to come, in my head, and when I tell them, they will not believe *me* either, as I have not believed him until—For one moment this afternoon was I not Gramp? not myself at all? but in another time, here and now, *in* me?

My grandfather clouds. I cannot see the doctor or the minister either, only this room spreading unrecognizably in my tears. And then I clasp my mother; at last she gives way—all the months of agony in caught, choked little cries. I bury her head in my shoulder. "It's all right," I say, and I hold her tight, close, as she cries. Gradually she subsides, and I can feel the blood strong in us—no, stronger now—and warm; I can feel the beating of her heart, as if something has passed into it from him, through her, into me. I want to tell him that, but it is too late. We are cursed with unbelief until it is too late, and then we are cursed with never telling. But we can feel it, yes—for I hold her and I feel the beating of her heart, and I can feel his blood in her, beating, echoing in me, in the deepest chamber of my heart.



The Deputy in Retrospect

• James A. Butler

Two years have passed since the New York opening of Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, a play that attacks Pope Pius XII for complicity by silence in the Nazi extermination of the Jews. The atmosphere of the play's early months was hardly conducive to a considered judgment of Hochhuth's charge: the Paris audience jumped on stage to grapple with the actors; such strange bedfellows as the Jewish War Veterans and the American Nazi Party picketed the New York show; the New York *Herald-American* ran a front-page headline: "To Mayor: Close *The Deputy*." During the last two years, however, significant material has appeared in German, French, Italian, English, and American publications that, taken together, historically vindicate Pius's choice to be a silent witness to genocide.

Hochhuth's formal charge against the Holy Father who did not protest against Nazi genocide reads thus: "A deputy of Christ who . . . hesitates even for an hour to lift his voice in one anathema to chill the blood of every last man on earth—that Pope is a criminal." But in order to show that the "Pope is a criminal," Hochhuth must prove three things: 1) the Pope did not significantly aid the Jews; 2) the Pope could have helped the Jews by protest; 3) the Pope chose not to protest through baseness of character.

In regard to the first point, *The Deputy* errs historically in its failure to recognize pronouncements and aid by which Pius helped the Jews and condemned the Nazis. As early as 1937, Pius, then Eugenio Pacelli, Papal Nuncio to Germany, had a considerable hand in the writing of Pius XI's *Mit brennender Sorge*, the encyclical that systematically destroyed the tenets of National Socialism. Pacelli was so successful in making his position on Nazism known that, on the day of his election to the Papacy, the *Berliner Morgenspost* lamented, "The election of Cardinal Pacelli is not accepted with favor in Germany, because he was always opposed to Nazism." The first encyclical of the new Pontiff, *Summi Pontificatus*, pleaded for observance of "that law of human solidarity and charity . . . regardless of the people to which they belong." Pius dealt more specifically with the persecution of the Jews when he expressed sympathy in his Christmas message of 1942 for "the hundreds of thousands who, sometimes only because of their nationality or descent, are condemned to death or exposed to progressive misery." Furthermore, the Pope sent out a secret encyclical, entitled *Opere et caritate*, which was to be read at the individual bishop's choice and ordered that all people suffering from discrimination to be given adequate help. The encyclical was to be accompanied by comment that Jewish persecution is incompatible with the Catholic faith. But as Joseph Lichten pointed out in *Pius XII and the Jews*, most bishops decided not to read the encyclical to their people on the grounds that it would do more harm than good. In light of *Mit bren-*

nender Sorge, *Summi Pontificatus*, the 1942 Christmas message, and *Opere et caritate*, it is therefore untenable to maintain that the Pope's position in regard to Nazism and racism was unclear.

Pope Pius, however, did not limit his aid for the Jews to words of general protest. The Holy Father, for example, personally donated over four million dollars to the Saint Raphael Society, an organization that helped Jews escape overseas. At the request of Jewish leaders, Pius appointed Padre Benedetto to operate the Delegation for the Assistance of Jewish Immigrants (DELA SEM) from the International College of Capuchins in Rome. In addition, the Pope approved a plan to falsify baptismal certificates for Jews that saved tens of thousands. Finally, when the German police attaché in Rome demanded either money or three hundred hostages from the Jewish community, the Pope personally lent the community \$16,789.

Some indication of how far Hochhuth erred in belittling the Pope's aid for the Jews is reflected in the statement of Jewish leaders. For example, the National President of the American Jewish Congress and a former Berlin rabbi, Joachim Prinz, declared, "The Pontiff will be remembered . . . for his earnest efforts in the rescue of thousands of victims of Nazi persecutions, including many Jewish men, women, and children." The National Director of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League added to the praise: "Pius XII was to a large extent personally responsible for organized action to help Jewish victims of the Nazis." Furthermore, the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Herzog, came to the Vatican to thank the Holy Father for his aiding of the Jews. Clearly, if one keeps in mind Pius's words and actions, Hochhuth does not prove the Pope was negligent in helping the Jews.

The second contention of *The Deputy*—the Pope could have curtailed or slowed the genocide by direct, public protest—also does not stand up in the light of history. On the contrary, the effects of previous protests had been disastrous. Pius XI's *Mit brennender Sorge*, the encyclical condemning the Nazis, had only stirred up intensified anti-Catholic activity in the Reich. A protest by Bishop Galen of Muenster caused a temporary cessation of euthanasia, but as a result of the protest the district lost by far the greater number of priests to Dachau than did any other diocese in Germany. According to a publication of the Polish Government in Exile, Church activity was reduced "to what it was at the time of the catacombs." After some limited protests issued under Pius's orders in 1942, no cessation of the Jewish persecution occurred, and some three thousand priests were murdered by the Nazis in retaliation. A similar protest by the Dutch bishops in late 1942 resulted in the immediate arrest and death of all Catholics of the Jewish race. As Monsignor Erich Klausener, son of a famous director of German Catholic Action who was murdered by the Nazis, wrote in *Der Tagesspiegel*: "More had to die simply because there was a violent protest."

Several high-placed persons recognized the futility and danger of a public declaration by the Pope himself against Jewish persecution. When Cardinal Sapieha of Poland received a secret protest against genocide from the Pope, the Cardinal exclaimed, according to witnesses: "It is impossible for me to convey this to my clergy, let alone my people. One copy in the hands of the SD and the Catholic Church in Poland is lost. Doesn't the Holy Father know

how it is with us?" The Cardinal later wrote to the Pope to plead with him not to protest, since it would only make the situation worse. The German Ambassador to the Holy See, Ernst von Weizsacker, wrote in his *Memoirs*: "It is precisely because they [the International Red Cross and the Roman Catholic Church] wanted to help the Jews that these organizations refrained from making any general and public appeals." A German aide to Weizsacker, Albert von Kessel, expressed a similar opinion in *Die Welt*: "All the members of the German Embassy at the Vatican were as one on one point. . . . A flaming protest on the part of Pius XII against the persecution of the Jews would presumably put him, and with him the whole Curia, into extreme danger . . . and would not have saved the life of a single Jew."

Hochhuth's contention in *The Deputy* that a direct, public protest would have stopped the genocide is thus naive in the extreme. The results of earlier limited protests and the opinions of the German diplomatic corps in Rome decisively show the aggravated situation that a protest would have caused. The Pope had no power to command an end to genocide to a Hitler who had proclaimed that if the Churches opposed him, "We shall handle them as ordinary criminals."

The Deputy portrayal of Pius coldly and aristocratically refusing to help the Jews is also at variance with historical indications of his character. Pius's actual words are far different from Hochhuth's Pius, who asks prayers for the Jews, "so many of whom will soon be standing before the face of God." The Holy Father emphasized his real reason for caution in a letter to Bishop von Preysing of Berlin, dated April 30, 1943: "Because of the dangers of reprisals and the situation arising from the length of the war, We leave it to the local Bishops to decide whether and to what degree it might be advisable to exercise caution in making episcopal and other pronouncements—*ad maiora mala vitanda* (to avoid greater evils). This is one of the reasons why we have limited our pronouncements. As far as we can see, our experience in 1942 over the general release of Papal statements justifies our attitude." A month later, on June 2, 1943, Pius had an opportunity to reiterate his reasoning before the College of Cardinals: "Every word that we addressed to the responsible authorities had to be seriously weighed and considered in the interests of the persecuted themselves, in order not to make their situation unwittingly even more difficult and unbearable." Indeed, the true picture of Pius, working behind the scenes and following the counsel of many not to protest publicly, is best expressed in his comment on the Jewish situation to Angelo Roncalli (the future John XXIII): "Above all else comes the saving of lives."

Rolf Hochhuth is, therefore, incorrect in his charges against Pius XII. Contrary to Hochhuth's indictment, the Pope worked actively behind the scenes for Jewish welfare. According to the best judgment of many German and Church officials, a direct public protest by the Pope would not have helped a single Jew but would have increased persecution. The Holy Father is not "a criminal," but as Bernard Baruch said, a man who "during a period of war, hate, and unspeakable crimes against humanity, helped keep burning the torch of peace, love, and brotherhood."

The Girl from Denmark

• Edward J. McTague

A twisting black cloud crept catlike from the seashore and stopped for a brief spell over the convent school of the Divine Child. As the first rain-drops spouted through the oaks and elms, several of the nuns who had been taking a meditative stroll along the shady lane or reading in the gazebo lifted their habits slightly above the ankles and skipped gracefully to the shelter of the convent. Reverend Mother and three of her Sisters were already sitting in rockers on a pavilion three stories above the campus. As the precipitation increased, Reverend Mother rocked rhythmically and thanked God for the cooling August shower. She smiled as she recalled Chesterton's lines:

And Noah he often said to his wife
When he sat down to dine,
I don't care where the water goes
If it doesn't get into the wine.

Then suddenly came a Z-shaped flash in the sky and crashing thunder. "God save us!" cried Reverend Mother.

All the Sisters stopped rocking and sat bolt upright.

"Don't worry," admonished Sister Anita, the high school physics teacher, "when you don't see the flash, you'll be seeing Saint Peter."

Sister Eloise, the voice and drama instructor, spoke softly. "Reverend Mother, the newscaster told of a poor doctor who was struck down by light-

ning on a golf course just as he raised his club—"

"How awfully tragic," Reverend Mother lamented.

"Reverend Mother," Sister Paula added, "I hear our Bishop is a very good golfer."

"How very interesting."

"Yes, Reverend Mother, my father says he's in the low eighties—"

"Oh, my dear, surely he's not that old."

"That's his score, Reverend Mother."

Another flash ripped through the clouds followed by a rocking bombardment. Reverend Mother turned to Sister Eloise and said nervously, "Please go in, dear, and light a blessed candle."

The rain was now torrential, and each flash lit up the campus revealing bubbling puddles. When the next flash beamed on the field like a searchlight, Sister Paula cried out: "Oh, Reverend Mother, there is someone on the hockey field!"

Darkness settled and the nuns waited expectantly. A flash came again, flooding the whole field. The nuns hurried to the rail of the deck and pointed. There was someone on the field standing near the hockey goal.

The Sisters remained quiet. They touched the beads at their side, as though they had the same thought: some poor soul, perhaps a child out there, alone, frightened, confused.

Reverend Mother recollected the poet's lines about the abandoned girl who jumped from a bridge:

Oh, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full
Home she had none.

The lightning was now flickering far away and the thunder a distant whisper. A rainbow appeared, as a bat darted about the pavilion roof. The nuns looked out over the porch rail.

Sister Anita, shading her eyes with her hand, said, "Reverend Mother, there is some sort of object on the field."

"Could be a child, Reverend Mother," Sister Paula added.

"What a dreadful situation," Reverend Mother rejoined sadly.

She turned to Sister Anita and directed her to go to the community room and fetch the field glasses. She adjusted the binoculars and looked through them. The nuns watched her, scarcely breathing. She lowered the glasses and remarked: "Yes, there is someone on the hockey field. Suppose you put on your gums and take the station wagon. Find out who is there. Be very careful; school opens shortly, and I want no one in the infirmary. I shall remain here like the captain on the bridge."

The Sisters hurried off gleefully, chattering like little girls going about the five-and-ten. The station wagon slushed through the rain-soaked field. As the Sisters neared the goal, a strange object rose to its feet and shook off a spray of water. It looked like a heifer. Then suddenly it let out a heavy bark.

"Oh, it's only a stray dog," said Sister Anita.

The animal lumbered over to the station wagon and stared at the occupants in a friendly way.

"It's a Great Dane," said Sister Anita. "Our family had one before I joined the community."

"He looks like a young bull," Sister Paula said.

Sister Anita left the car and called back, "A spayed female fawn." She patted the dog's large head. "Let's take her up to the house and show her to Reverend Mother. She's too big for the wagon; I'll walk her back."

As the station wagon moved away, the Great Dane followed the nun like an obedient first-grader. The Sister led her to the shed where the school bus, mowers, and other equipment were kept. She picked a cool spot below a screened window. Sister Eloise brought in some scraps from the evening meal. The Dane was grateful and licked her hand. The nuns went back to the convent and told Reverend Mother they had a guest for the night.

The week after Labor Day the girls returned to the Academy of the Divine Child. Some arrived by school bus; others drove the family car. At assembly in the gym, the registrar, Sister Maureen, stood before the microphone and announced:

"Welcome, girls. It is our fervent hope and ardent wish that we will all enjoy a very profitable school year. The tuition will be accepted for the first semester any day this week in my office. We recommend also that you keep in your prayers the beatification, God willing, of our holy Foundress. Her process is now under way in Rome. We call your attention respectfully to a change in the uniform. The hemline has been lowered one inch, and forest green Bermuda socks are in order. We remind you

again and again to remain at a reasonable distance from the fences during recreation and to pay no attention whatsoever to men and boys whistling from moving vehicles. Reverend Mother is here to greet you and has a message."

The students applauded politely as Reverend Mother rose. She adjusted her pince-nez and smiled sweetly like a gardener looking at her new blossoms. She was quite anxious about her girls. Many, she knew, would turn out well, but then there would be some who would return to grieve her with their problems. She used to tell her Sisters to do their best, sow the seed, and let the Lord take care of the harvest.

"I wish to tell you," Reverend Mother began, "that we have accepted an interesting and unusual lady to our campus. She arrived in the midst of a heavy storm, and it would have been heartless to turn her away. We have provided an apartment for her in the carriage house. She is a lovely Dane. I trust you will be kind to her." Reverend Mother laughed as the girls clapped their hands. Then she continued: "If any one present should know where her real home is—"

There was a shuffling of loafers in the rear of the gym. A little girl in striped shift was wagging her hand and calling: "Reverend Mother! Reverend Mother, please—"

The students up front turned around.

"Yes, dear," said Reverend Mother.

"Reverend Mother, I know where the Dane lives. She's from the pig farm about two miles down the lane across the creek."

"Thank you, dear."

"Reverend Mother, her name is Ophelia."

"Thank you, dear."

Reverend Mother walked slowly out of the hall with her head bowed.

Sister Anita said to Sister Paula: "Why didn't that freshman keep her duckhouse shut?"

That evening in the community room Reverend Mother said to the Sisters: "I telephoned the pig farm, and our Sister Ophelia will be picked up by her owner tomorrow morning." The Sisters felt very sad.

"Too bad she must leave our community," Reverend Mother went on mournfully. "She was apparently quite contented and would have made many friends among our little girls. But we must surrender to a principle laid down in Moral Theology, *res clamat ad dominum*; to paraphrase it a bit, "the dog barks for his master." Let us now repair to the carriage house and bring the last hearty meal to our dear Sister Ophelia."

The next afternoon at the end of the class day, the man from the pig farm stood at the main gate of the Divine Child Academy talking to Reverend Mother. He was tired and sweaty, for he had just stepped a short time ago from behind a plough. He twirled his cap nervously with one hand and in the other held a heavy choker collar and leash.

"Good afternoon, ma'am." He spoke softly and pleasantly. "My wife told me you called about Ophelia. I'm sorry, ma'am, if she made trouble for you."

"She was no trouble at all," Reverend Mother assured him.

"Ma'am, she's a bad, bad girl. I had to whip her the other night, and she took off in a storm."

"I am sorry, sir, to hear this."

"One day last week, ma'am, she

raced through a flock of my neighbor's Plymouth Rocks and stamped on all his best layers."

"That is indeed sad," Reverend Mother murmured.

"She tore the wash off the line and made my overalls look like shredded wheat. Ma'am, she's no good."

The pig farmer was as mad as a bull and snorted indignantly. "A few weeks ago she cornered two little shoats, and one got a heart attack. She worries the sow and keeps runnin' circles around my prize razor-back."

"Ah, how sad."

"Yes, ma'am, I decided coming up the road there is only one solution—I'm going to destroy her. Where is she, ma'am?"

Reverend Mother shuddered. "Oh, please don't do that. Don't have her put to sleep. Perhaps you and I can make a satisfactory arrangement."

The pig farmer bowed his head meekly.

"If you care to sell her, sir, we shall make a reasonable offer."

"Oh, no, ma'am," the farmer objected. "I wouldn't impose a problem on you nice ladies. If you want her, that's your business. You can have her free. Yes, ma'am, I warn you, she's a thief, a bad girl and bears watching."

The farmer eagerly handed the leash and choker collar to Reverend Mother. Her lace lit up. She told the pig farmer he could have visiting privileges and come to see Ophelia.

The farmer climbed on his tractor. As it chugged away, he called back. "She has all her needles; she has her license, and I'll send you her papers. Thanks a lot, ma'am."

Reverend Mother was as happy as a little girl getting her first Christmas doll. She walked quickly up the

lane to the carriage house. "Good heavens!" she exclaimed. "Please, Ophelia, do not chew the chaplain's spare tire." Then she slipped the choker collar over her head.

A few days before Thanksgiving holidays, Sister Gabriel, who had charge of the cafeteria, came to Reverend Mother, flushed with excitement.

"I can scarcely believe this." Reverend Mother shook her head dubiously.

"Please, Reverend Mother, the girls were accusing one another and suspicious of one another—"

"Child, this is a most dreadful situation—"

"Yes, Reverend Mother, but it is not our girls at all, but Ophelia."

"Oh, never."

"Yes, Reverend Mother, Ophelia has been taking the girls' lunches, their gym shoes, their hockey sticks."

"Child, this is incredible."

"But, Reverend Mother, the senior class president and I traced all the missing articles to Sister Ophelia's room in the carriage house. Reverend Mother, she is definitely a kleptomaniac."

Sister Gabriel folded her hands in an attitude of prayer. Her face glowed with confidence. She had corralled the culprit and now awaited Reverend Mother's decision.

"I am very distressed to learn of this," Reverend Mother sighed. "Of course, Ophelia is just a freshman, as it were, and has yet to learn the Decalogue. She requires encouragement and instruction. I myself shall take little Sister in hand."

* * *

The Christmas concert was always held on the Sunday evening before the feast. Every girl in the academy, from the top senior to the little freshman had a part. This was a good ar-

rangement, for it gathered all the parents, the relatives and friends. When the receipts were counted the next day, the econome was heard to remark to Reverend Mother: "Thank God, this will help meet the interest and pay off a little of the principal."

Sister Anita and Sister Eloise took the cash to the bank in the station wagon. Ophelia went along for security reasons and was stretched out full length in the back. Sister Anita, holding the black bag, put a nickel in the parking meter while Sister Eloise held Ophelia on the leash. They bowed to the traffic officer, who touched his cap as they crossed over to the bank.

"Good morning," the teller greeted, as Sister Anita lifted the bag to the counter. "We haven't seen you for some time."

"Unfortunately, no," she replied. "We should like to come oftener."

Ophelia was fussing at the leash and, rising on her hind legs, stared at all the money behind the counter.

Sister Eloise whispered to her: "Stay, Ophelia." The Dane went down and lay on the floor partially obscured by the nuns.

"We shall mail you the deposit receipt," the teller said, as he handed the empty bag to Sister Anita.

At the other end of the circular counter, a well-dressed gentleman stood before the teller. He wore a Stetson Tyrolean with a colorful feather in the band. The gray about his temples and trimmed mustache indicated wisdom and careful planning. He wore a topcoat of fine texture and gun-metal cordovans. From behind, he gave the appearance of a well-to-do mortician or a successful Member of the House. He lifted an alligator bag to the counter and opened it very cautiously. In his right kid-gloved hand he displayed a re-

volver. The pistol had a handle of mother-of-pearl, and the muzzle gleamed like the cutlery one might expect to pick up in the Waldorf Towers. It was of the .32 caliber class and properly registered. It was an excellent example of the craftsmanship of the famed Samuel Colt. It never occurred to anyone in the bank to notice the man with the alligator bag and the weapon, had not the teller, who sang soprano in a church choir, let out with a piercing "God of our Fathers!" The patrons writing deposit slips at the desks looked around and gazed languidly in that direction.

In compliance with the demand, the teller stuffed the currency into the bag. The man seized the satchel. He backed off, holding the gun aloft, and addressed the depositors: "If you please, my good people, stand fast until I make my exit." Then with measured steps, he moved to the door like an actor in a summer playhouse. As he passed the Sisters, he lowered the gun and made a profound bow.

Sister Anita touched her beads. Her lips quivered. She stirred the great Dane with her foot. "Up, Ophelia. Get that man, and may God forgive me!" In an instant Ophelia was up. She plunged forward like a New York Giant tackle. She hit the man with her massive head and shoulders just above the buttocks. The poor chap described an arc as he rose heavenward. The revolver fell to the marble floor and skidded to a waste basket. Ophelia dug her teeth into the alligator bag and dashed out the door, with the Sisters following.

* * *

It was after the first of the new year when the Vicar General for Religious visited the Convent of the Divine Child. He was a personable and

striking man in his early sixties, peaceful and unobtrusive. He never argued or tried to persuade, but listened like a perceptive psychiatrist.

When Reverend Mother entered the parlor, she bowed slightly.

"You are welcome, Monsignor."

"Thank you, Reverend Mother."

She took his Homburg and placed it on a table near the door.

The room was plain and simple as a Mennonite *wohnzimmer*. In a corner of the room was a little feretory holding a picture of Mother Foundress. On the table was the *Messenger* and a copy of *Commonweal*.

"The Most Reverend Bishop," the Vicar began, "has asked me to bring to your attention a matter that concerns the community."

"Yes?"

"It has to do with one of the religious."

"One of ours, Monsignor?"

"Yes, Reverend Mother. Before proceeding any further, may I respectfully inquire about the bank money. It was returned?"

"Yes, Monsignor, promptly."

"Any word about the robber?"

"Several of our Sisters have visited him in the hospital. The poor fellow is quite chastened. He revealed that this was the first time a Sister had slapped him down since the sixth grade."

"Sometimes zeal, Reverend Mother, moves one to violence."

The Vicar opened his brief case and took out a memorandum and an assortment of newspaper clippings. He inquired: "Reverend Mother, you have here a Sister Ophelia?"

"Yes, Monsignor."

"Professed?"

"She's a Dane, Monsignor."

"How extraordinary to have a vo-

cation from Denmark! Not many Catholics there, you know." The Vicar looked up at the ceiling and tapped his chin with his index finger. His mind was now jetting across the North Atlantic. "I was in Denmark a few years ago. Lovely place. Very friendly people. Mean annual temperature of 45 degrees—"

"Our young Sisters," observed Reverend Mother, "love Danish pastry."

The Vicar began to arrange the papers on the top of his brief case, remarking, "My guess, Reverend Mother, is that Sister Ophelia is a big strong blond."

"She is a rather lovely beast, Monsignor."

The Vicar started. "Reverend Mother, his excellency has no intention of disturbing your peace of mind. His one thought is the reputation of your splendid community. No matter what Sister has done, let us work as a team to assist her. Recall the counsel of Hamlet: 'Frailty, thy name is woman.'"

"Thank you, Monsignor."

The Vicar stood and unfolded the newspaper clippings on the parlor table. "These items, Reverend Mother, will give you a graphic explanation of our Most Reverend Bishop's anxiety." He pointed to a headline. "Look at this one, Reverend Mother": *Sister Ophelia Tackles Burglar*. "And this": *Ophelia Mauls Gangster*. "And here is a beauty right from our own diocesan organ": *Divine Child Sister Saves Loot*.

The Vicar folded the papers and put them back in the brief case. "You and I understand, Reverend Mother, the laity expect our Sisters to be ladies, not policewomen, not experts in the art of judo—"

"Yes, Monsignor. Perhaps you

should meet our Sister Ophelia."

"Yes, Reverend Mother, it may help."

"I shall have her come in."

"Very good, Reverend Mother."

"Monsignor, if you will, I shall remain during the interview."

"That will not be necessary, Reverend Mother. I should first speak to her privately."

"I fear, Monsignor, to leave you alone with her. She came to us from a pig farm and had been ill-treated by a charcutier. Then the bank episode has served to make her intolerant

of all men. She is a very powerful female, but here in our community quite tractable and obedient."

The Vicar General for Religious quaked. He was tempted to pick up his hat. Reverend Mother went into the vestibule and called the Sister Portress. "Please fetch Sister Ophelia."

That night the Vicar General for Religious went to the Bishop's residence. He said: "You know, when I visited that convent this morning, I remember distinctly wearing a brand new hat; but when I left, Bishop—"

The Premise

• Charles Edward Eaton

Hawk-shaped, these shadows of the diver fall
Into the way the pool argues out its blue.

The body, some do not know, can be a harsh
thought too—

Consider, in larger terms, the weighted parachute's
bolder universal.

An umbrella collapsed, a plummeting bird—
These are the facts of fall on which to trade.
One could set up a metaphysical racket with the aid
Of any two of these that mutually concurred.

I offer, however, a beaked shadow, the chute
Of an unknown body, quite merciless to ground.
But even here we range the world too wide, confound
The issue of the swimmer, half figment in a feathered
suit.

Let us close in on fall, believe the pool
Which cleanses hawks and gives us man—
Surely we flicker in doubt, and no one can
Be sure he knows what went into the beautiful.

Ragmop

• Jesse Stuart

When I drove to Blakesburg Graded School to fetch our daughter Janet home, she came running across the schoolyard crying. In one arm she carried a load of books, in the other she carried a small hound pup. Her classmates followed her, watching eagerly.

"Daddy, I know you don't want her," Janet said. "But I want her. I've named her Ragmop."

"Why call her Ragmop?" I asked.

"Because she looks like one Mama used to use," she replied.

Her classmates crowded around the car to listen.

"Where on earth did you get that mangy pup?" I asked. "Take it back! Of course we don't want her! She'll give Birchfield the mange!"

"Daddy, I can't take her back," Janet said. "She has no place to go. I found her on the schoolyard while we were playing. Miss Mansfield told me she was a stray puppy somebody had dropped on the street. Nobody would have her, so I wanted her. Miss Mansfield said I could have Ragmop."

Then, Janet's teacher, Miss Mansfield, walked across the schoolyard to the car, where her pupils had congregated.

"Yes, Mr. Powderjay, I told Janet she could have the little thing," Miss Mansfield said, smiling. "That is, if you would let her."

"Daddy, can't I have her?" Janet asked. She held on to the mangy little hound pup that squirmed and

whined to get back on the ground. "Daddy, I don't have a dog. You have Birchfield, but he belongs to you and Mama. He won't follow me."

"Take her with you," I said. "We'll decide on whether we'll keep her or not after we get home. We can't make a decision here."

Janet smiled, and I opened the car door so she could get in with her puppy and books. Had it not been for her teacher and classmates around the car, I wouldn't have let her take the pup home. She could have left her there on the school ground. Miss Mansfield smiled and her classmates smiled as we drove away. I had never dreamed that our daughter would want such an ugly hound pup with the long ears and the emaciated scrawny body. She was the ugliest hound pup I had ever seen. All of my life at my father's home we had had hounds and had hunted foxes and possums. But I had never seen a hound pup that looked like this one. I drove toward home with Janet and her puppy in the rear seat. Once I looked back and the puppy was sick. Janet was tearing paper from her notebook and wiping the seat.

When I got home, Janet left her books in the car, took her pup and ran to the house to show her mother. I had to take soap and water and wash the back seat of the car. Why did I ever let her bring this pup home? When I went inside, Janet and her mother were looking at the pup.

"I think your daddy will let you keep her," her mother said.

"Oh, I hope so, Mother," Janet sighed.

"Who's going to feed that pup and care for her?" I asked. "I'll have it to do. And who's going to kill the mange on her? I think the mange has gone too far. I doubt that she can be cured. Look how her sides are bleeding!"

And they were bleeding. There were great raw places over her body until one could hardly tell the color of her hair.

"Daddy, Mother will help me kill the mange," Janet said. "Mother will help me feed her. Won't you let me keep her? If I don't keep her, Daddy, nobody will have her and Ragmop will die."

"How do you know no one else will have her?" I said.

"Daddy, nobody at school would have her but me," Janet spoke softly with her eyes filled with tears. "Some of the boys even kicked her."

"That's inhuman to do a pup that way," I said. "She should be put out of her misery."

"What do you mean, Daddy?" Janet asked.

"Don't tell her what you mean, Shan," Deanems said.

"She should have medical care," I said. "She should have food first and mange medicine second!"

"I'll feed her, Daddy, and you go get the medicine," Janet said.

"Can't you get mange killer at the drugstore in the morning, Shan?" Deanems asked.

"I'm going to take her to a doctor," I said. "I'll take her with me."

"No, Daddy, she can't stand the trip," Janet said. "Look how sick the poor little thing got coming from Blakesburg in the car."

"You'll have to go to Auckland to see a veterinarian," Deanems said.

"But I'll go see one," I said. "I'll take her to Dr. Martin."

"His office will be closed by the time you get there," Deanems warned me.

"But he lives in Auckland and I'll call him at his home."

Then I put Ragmop in my car and started to Auckland. Why am I doing this for a little mangy pup? I thought. Because our little ten-year-old daughter wants this pup! She really wants her. I'll do all I can to save her.

I drove straight to Dr. Martin's office. Just as Deanems had warned me, the office was closed. I'd driven just a little beyond all speed limits too. Then I went to a nearby drugstore, used their phone, and called Dr. Martin's home. Mrs. Martin said he hadn't come from the office yet. I told her I'd wait until he did. I held the phone and paid the costs until Dr. Martin arrived. I told him about the pup my little girl had brought home from school.

"But it's an emergency," I said. "We must have mange medicine. We must have it now. The cost doesn't matter. It's a matter of life and death. This pup has the worst case of mange I've ever seen."

"I'll be there," he said.

Dr. Martin came back to the office. He prepared the medicine. I thought the price was steep for the bottle of medicine. But I kept on thinking about Janet's telling me how the boys had kicked the pup on the schoolyard. I was determined to save her, for Janet.

When I got home, Janet and Deanems fed Ragmop warm milk and bread, and the wrinkles in her little stomach stretched tight. But she was biting her tail, and she was cuffing

Frank and I and the others sat there, also as usual, wondering where all the beckoning women and unlikely places were.

That afternoon Gino could not walk on the beach. He had to attend a meeting of the school's religious sodality, which he had recently joined. It was a hot day, and there were many pretty girls in swimming suits prancing about us. We played our "I got her" game for a long time. When we tired of it, I told Frank what the girls on the streetcar had said about Gino.

"I believe it," he said. He stopped and dug his heel into the wet sand. "I been thinking about him." He looked at the sea, then at the sky, then at the rushes, where several men stood looking down at us. "He reminds me of those guys."

"Those guys?" I said, surprised.

He spoke confidentially. "You know that they're—" The word was apparently a new one to him and came off his tongue in uncertain syllables—"homersexules."

"They are?"

"I think so. But that's not what makes me think of Gino." He hunched his round shoulders and looked toward the dunes as though he thought the men might be able to overhear. "The thing about those guys that makes me think of him is that they're not even natural homersexules. A natural one would come down on the beach and try to talk to boys. All they do is stand up there and look. Like Gino. He isn't a natural boy, if you ask me. All he ever wants to do is stare at girls. If he don't watch out, after a while he's gonna start hiding in bushes and peeking through windows at women undressing and that kind of stuff."

I thought that what he said made sense until I thought of something

else. We were nearing the tunnel when it came crashing over me like a heavy breaker. "What about us?" I said.

"Huh?"

"We're no better than Gino. All we ever do is look."

"That's different," he protested. "We don't want to stare. We want to meet some girls."

"Sure, but we haven't. And what if we don't? If what you say is true, we're liable to end up like those old men too."

Frank screwed his head into his shoulders, which meant he was thinking. "You're right," he said. "I know that if I keep looking at girls without speaking to them, I'm gonna drive myself nuts. We gotta meet some."

A young body, full and soft and delicate—I had seen her on the beach just a few moments earlier—now bloomed in my mind's eye. "I'm with you," I said eagerly. "When?"

Frank slapped his hand against the rough wet wall of the tunnel. "Not when," he said desperately, "but how?"

We found a way. Buddy was my neighbor. He was a couple of years older than me and went to a public high school. I had spoken to him only during the football games the boys on our block sometimes played in the street after supper. He was a pretty-faced boy, and I often saw him talk-in to girls on his front steps. He made them laugh and giggle and throw their hands up and coo, "Ohhhh, Buddy." He seemed to know a lot of girls, and I envied him. I mentioned him to Frank, and we decided that we should try to get dates through him.

It was nearly dark when we rang his doorbell. We told him our prob-

lem. He came down his front steps, sat on one of the stucco banisters that jutted out over the sidewalk, lit a cigarette, held it before him in his cupped hand, studying it, and said, "What kind you want?" as though he had a barrel full of them.

Frank and I stood meekly on the sidewalk looking up at him. "Any kind," I said.

"Pretty ones," said Frank.

"How many?" Buddy said casually, twisting his cigarette, looking at it and not us.

"Two," said Frank.

"No, three," I said. I turned to Frank. "We've got to fix up Gino too."

"Gino?"

"I'm not sure, but I think he wants a date as much as we do. He just won't admit it."

"Suppose he does? Suppose he still won't admit it? Suppose he does chicken out? We're stuck with an extra girl. What do we do then?"

I realized that we should have mentioned the possibility of dates to Gino. I sat down on the bottom step and put my hands over my eyes, trying to imagine what Gino would do if we told him we had made a date for him.

Buddy began impatiently flicking his cigarette over my ear. "I haven't got all night," he said.

"Sorry," I said. I looked at Frank, who was standing a foot or two from Buddy's garage door, facing it, frowning at it. The decision would have to be mine. I was curious about Gino. I took a chance. I closed my eyes and said, "Make it three."

Buddy yawned and flipped his cigarette into the gutter. "Three it is."

When we were alone, Frank said, "Now what do we do?"

"Tell Gino, I guess."

"Oh, boy." Frank's head sunk be-

tween his shoulders until it seemed a bump on his chest. "Oh, boy."

The next afternoon the three of us were standing near the surf, facing the breakers, silent.

Frank said, "Suppose out of nowhere three beautiful women suddenly appeared before us and said, 'How would you boys like to have a little fun tonight?'"

"Huh?" Gino screwed up his mouth and looked at Frank under his eyebrows.

"Well?" said Frank, scanning the horizon.

Gino followed Frank's eyes. Then, deciding that Frank had presented him with a riddle, he said, "They'd be mermaids?"

Frank's mouth went hopelessly down at the edges.

We pulled our feet out of the sand and continued walking. A few minutes later I said, "I'd sure hate to turn into a so-and-so like that." I was looking at one of the old men who was standing above the tunnel watching us.

"Me too," said Frank, looking up at him. "I can just imagine what he's thinking: Look at those young boys down there; I'd like to go down there and drag one of them up into the dunes with me. Maybe that dark-haired one. He looks like a good prospect."

"What are you talking about?" said Gino.

"Those men," said Frank, sweeping his arm toward the rushes, "they're homersexules."

"Who says so?"

"What do you think they hang around the beach looking at boys for?" Frank said.

Gino made a face as though he had bitten into the world's sourest lemon. His eyebrows shot up when he heard

me speak. Though I was still doubtful of Frank's theory about Gino, I came right out and said, "If you keep going along without girls, you'll end up a perverted old fool like that guy."

Gino glanced from one of us to the other. Finally he said, "I feel sorry for you guys, very sorry."

That angered Frank. "Sorry for what?"

"It's a sin to talk about things like that."

"A sin!" Frank shouted. "What kind of a sin is it compared to the sins you'd commit if you turn into a pervert or something."

"Who's turning into a pervert?"

"You are," Frank said. "Or you might."

"Me?"

"Yes, you. Because you don't want to get near a girl."

His words seemed to paralyze Gino. For a long time only his jacket, caught by little sweeping gusts of wind, moved. Then his mouth opened and closed, but he said nothing.

I tried to soften the blow. I said, "Maybe you won't turn into one of those guys. Maybe you'll be a priest or something."

It did not seem to help. Without a word, without looking at either of us, he turned and began to drag himself toward the tunnel. Frank and I followed.

The man we had been referring to stood over the tunnel entrance grinning down at us as we approached. It was late, and there were few people on the beach. At such times the old men leered openly. If Gino noticed him, he did not indicate it, for he entered the tunnel without looking up. "Wait," I said impulsively to Frank just before we entered the tunnel. Trembling, I put my hand on his sleeve. Frank had explained the men,

but I had to find out for myself. I looked up. "Why do you stand there grinning at us? What do you want with us?"

Still grinning but saying nothing, he leaned over the railing and extended his hand beckoningly to me.

"Run!" said Frank, and we shot into the tunnel. "Hurry," I said as we passed Gino. He ran too.

We finally stopped running several blocks from the beach. When we caught our breaths, Frank and I told Gino what had happened.

"I didn't see anyone on top of the tunnel," he said.

"That's the trouble with you," Frank snapped. "You never see anything. I think you're just too scared to see things."

"I'll take it back," Frank said, "just as soon as you answer one question."

Gino looked at me. I looked at Frank.

"Tom and I fixed the three of us with dates. Are you going to come along with us or not?"

Gino took a step back. "What are you trying to do?" he said, offended.

"You heard me. You gonna come or aren't you?"

Gino gave me a desperate look.

"He's right, Gino," I said.

"I don't want a date."

"Too late," said Frank. "All fixed up. Are you coming?"

He seemed to be shivering. "I—I've never had a date."

"Neither have we," I said as gently as I could. "We've all got to start sometime."

"No," he said, "I don't want to. I—it's too easy to get into trouble."

"Trouble? What kind of trouble?" said Frank.

"What Father said in class. . . . Women are here . . . to tempt us."

"These aren't women," I said.

"Girls too. They're just as bad."

"That's an excuse," Frank said.

"That's not the real reason."

"Yes." Gino had backed up against a telephone pole. His arms dropped to his sides. He rubbed his hands against his pants legs. Then he reached back and gripped the pole. "I—I don't want a date."

"Too late," Frank said.

"Wait," I said to Frank, seeing how frightened Gino was, "if he doesn't want a date, why should we force—"

"Shut up," Frank said, waving me aside. In the darkness he moved in on Gino, crouching. "You're not holy," he growled. "You're not turning pervert. You're scared, that's what it is. And you're too cowardly to admit it. You nod at everything the priest says. That's an excuse so you won't have to face things. Like girls. Or the old men. But they're there. Both of them. And so are you. You can't even face yourself. Who are you anyway? Tom and I, we don't know. Because you don't know. Until you find out, you'll never be anything, not even one of those shriveled up homersexules." He pointed his finger at Gino's chest. "And how are you gonna find out. Huh? How?"

Gino was shaking his head, saying with the gesture that he didn't know.

Frank backed off now. He shook his head and said, "I'm sorry, but I just had to say it." Then he looked at Gino, who was ungluing himself from the pole. "You gonna come with us, or aren't you?"

Gino was standing very still, staring at a distant street lamp. "I—I don't know," he whispered. He turned and headed down the dark street toward his home.

Buddy had arranged that we meet the girls the next evening at the soda

fountain on Judah. Frank and I had decided that afternoon not to tell Gino that tonight was date night, certain that, if we did so, he would back out. He came down his stairs believing that we were going to take one of our occasional evening walks through the neighborhood, stopping at the soda fountain only for a coke.

When we entered the fountain, Frank moved quickly up the aisle toward the three girls, who were, as Buddy had said they would be, seated at the end of the long counter. I remained with Gino, who stood beside the little candy counter and stared at Frank as he stopped beside the girls and began speaking.

"Who're they?" Gino said softly, his large eyes widening.

Looking at him I was sure we had made a terrible mistake. "I'm sorry. We—Maybe we should have said something. Those are our dates."

He stood rigidly, scowling at Frank and the girls. "Traitors," he said in a low whisper. "Why didn't you tell me?"

It would not have surprised me to see him pick up the cash register and try to crash it against my skull. I would not have blamed him.

Instead, he turned to the counter, took a quarter from his pocket, and said to the proprietor, "Nickels." When he got his change, he moved to the pinball machine near the window.

"We ought to join Frank," I said softly.

He slipped a nickel into the coin slot and, without turning, said, "Leave me alone."

I walked up the aisle. Frank introduced me to the girls. I stood stupidly, listening to him tell them about all the big night clubs downtown, as though he had frequented all of them.

buy you a hundred dolls with what I've spent on her mischief. I could buy you a pony. I could buy you a bicycle. We must let her go."

"Daddy, you can't let Ragmop go," Janet said. "I understand, Daddy, what she's done. But I don't want a hundred dolls. I don't want the pony. I don't want the bicycle."

"Then what do you want?"

"I want to keep Ragmop!"

When I started to drive down the Valley to see if Cousin Penny knew somebody who would have her, I had another idea. I would surprise Deanems and Janet. I drove on to Blakesburg, instead of stopping to see Cousin Penny. I asked the Lawton Hardware if they had muzzles for dogs. They didn't. I went to every store in Blakesburg but I couldn't get a muzzle. Then I went to Auckland, twenty miles beyond, and I couldn't get a muzzle. I came back to Blakesburg, for I had another idea. I got Dave Osterbam, the blacksmith, to make a muzzle. I took it home and put it on Ragmop and I turned her loose.

When Deanems and Janet watched her run and jump with her muzzle on, they smiled. But when I had my plumber back to put insulation on the water pipes, Deanems didn't smile when I showed her the bill.

"Shan, what will we ever do with that dog?" she sighed. "I didn't know a hound was like that. I wouldn't have had her on the place if I had known."

"I told you, didn't I?" I said. "That pup has cost me \$500. And she's not worth a cent. And I don't think she will ever be."

"You won't get rid of her because of Janet," Deanems said. "You'd let her tear the house down. Now what excuse will you think up when people come around here and see her muzzled? What will people think?"

"I'll tell them she's a friendly dog, but she might bite anyone who interferes with her while she's playing," I said.

The muzzle didn't keep Ragmop from biting off the Easter lilies. The blossoms went through the holes in her muzzle and she nipped, chewed, and spit them out.

"I could send you away," Deanems scolded her. "Why did I ever let Janet bring you here?"

"I'll keep her until she's of age," I said. "Maybe she'll grow up and have serious thoughts. If I could get her interested in something."

"You talk like she's human," Deanems scolded as she walked away.

People did come and ask why I had a muzzle on such a pretty hound. I had as many excuses as the number who asked me. Many people ran from her because they thought she was a biting dog. But Ragmop overtook them and wanted to play.

One morning in September, Cousin Penny drove up in his little truck.

"I'm looking for a dog, Shan," he said.

"Lost one?"

"Nope, it's not mine," he said. "I wish she was my dog!"

"What about her?" I asked.

"She wore a muzzle," he said. "We ran to the crossing last night and saw her cross! She led the best fox hounds in Greenwood County! She's a thousand-dollar dog."

"She's more than that," I said quickly. "She has cost me much!"

"How do you know?" he asked.

"She's Janet's scrawny little pup you looked at," I said proudly.

"You don't say," he said, looking at me with his big dark eyes. "That dog went by last night like a ghost. That pretty hound, brown and white and her ears back on the wind and

she has a musical bark. Prettiest barking music I ever heard. She set the weeds on fire! Man, what a dog!"

"Will you take your hounds, and Janet, Deanems, and me with you some night?" I asked.

"I sure will," he replied, with a big smile. "You can get a thousand dollars for that dog."

"Janet will have to have more," I laughed. "What night do we go to Six Hickories?" I asked.

"Tonight, when the moon is full," he replied. "We've got a good long-winded red fox at Six Hickories. Now, it will take a good one to stay in front of that hound with the muzzle."

Penny got into his truck. His face bore a serious expression. He had seldom missed on his judgment of dogs. I watched him drive away. Then I went to the back door where Rag-

mop sat looking in at Deanems in the kitchen. I pulled the muzzle from her head.

"Oh, Shan, don't do that," Deanems said. "She'll wreck this place."

"No, she won't," I said. "She's found herself. Our naughty Ragmop's bad days are over. She outran the best foxhounds in Greenwood County last night."

"Couldn't have been Ragmop."

"A light-brown and white dog with a muzzle on," I said. "Cousin Penny was out to find the dog. He stopped here. Our Ragmop is that dog! Cousin Penny says she's the greatest he's ever heard run a fox."

Then Deanems laughed and I laughed. And Ragmop jumped up and broke a glass from our kitchen storm door with her paw. I didn't notice the glass, but I looked at her foot. It was not cut and I was happy. She'd be in the fox chase tonight.

Oxford Bells

• Mother Mary Anthony, S.H.C.J.

Single or mingled, hours' jangling wrings
Remembrance more than memory, more than
One pilgrim tracks within his brain, or can
Sustain alone, for all the weight of wings
And spires assails his consciousness and flings
The years like stones. Now let us build, says man,
A ruin for tomorrow. Spider span

Persistent, wall rises, filament clings.
Temporal music spells the garden round
The ancient city bastions. Arrow slits
Are ivied; grass grows on the sentry walk.
Ripe summer is an everlasting ground,
Repeated pattern, put together bits
From mellow belfries copious as talk.

Contributors

PHILIP F. O'CONNOR had a short story, "Pagan," in the January 1965 issue of this magazine and is at work on a novel, *The Disappearance of Thomas Hanlon*. He is an assistant professor in Clarkson College. **MICHAEL PAUL NOVAK** has had his poetry accepted by *The Colorado Quarterly*, *Midwest Quarterly*, and *The Western Humanities Review*; he is an instructor in English at St. Mary's College, Leavenworth, Kansas. **H. E. FRANCIS** writes from Mendoza, Argentina, where he is on a Fulbright grant for the second time as visiting lecturer at the National University of Cuyo: "'The Deepest Chamber' will appear in Spanish translation in a collection of stories to be published this year in Buenos Aires." He has had numerous stories published in **four quarters**. **JAMES A. BUTLER**, a junior at La Salle College majoring in English studies, writes in response to a query: "My article on Ferlinghetti will appear in the Spring 1966 issue of *Renascence*. Despite its title, 'Lawrence Ferlinghetti Is a Dirty Old Man,' it is a study of this poet's use of projective verse. My primary interests in English studies are the Romantic poets and versification techniques. I hope to work with versification throughout my graduate education; my career plans call for the teaching of English on the college level. This summer I hope to study modern poetry at Oxford University." **THE REVEREND EDWARD J. McTAGUE**, pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania, had a story, "The Bishop Tees Off," in the November 1965 issue of this magazine. **CHARLES EDWARD EATON** is a poet who makes his home at Merlin Stone, Woodbury, Connecticut. **JESSE STUART**, author of *Beyond Dark Hills*, *Trees of Heaven*, *Hold April*, among other books, had a story in the January 1966 issue of **four quarters**, "Still the Champion," a tale of fox hunting in his native hills. **MOTHER MARY ANTHONY, S.H.C.J.**, poet and teacher, is a frequent contributor to this magazine. She is professor of English at Rosemont College.

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